

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Volume II - Chapter 4 Continued

Contents

Volume II - The Gospel of Jesus Christ by Pere M. - J. Lagrange, O.P

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Chapter	ss		Page
4		Preaching Chiefly Outside Galilee And The Formation of The Disciples (continued)	1
	4	From The Feast of Tabernacles To The Going Up To Jerusalem For The Feast Of The Dedication	1
		Calling of Several Disciples	2
		The Mission of the 72 Disciples	4
		The Revelation of The Father and The Son	7
		Charity towards our neighbor. The Parable of the Good Samaritan	9
		Mary and Martha	13
		The Our Father	14
		Prayer Always Heard	17
		The Casting Out of a Devil. The Slander of the Pharisees	19
		The Blessedness of the Mother of Jesus	24
		Jesus Himself is a Sign	25
		Jesus is the Light. How We Can Receive That Light	26
		The Pharisees and Doctors of the Law	27
		Instructions to the Disciples Concerning Their Future Preaching	33
		Detachment From The Goods of This Earth	35
		God's Providence May Be Trusted For The Needs Of Life	36
		Be Ready For The Master's Coming	37

		<u>Jesus is a Sign Of Contradiction</u>	40
		<u>It is Time To Be Reconciled With God</u>	41
		<u>The Need of Immediate Repentance</u>	43
		<u>The Cure of The Deformed Woman On The Sabbath</u>	45
4	5	From The Feast of The Dedication to Christ's Going Up For The Last Pasch	46
		Jesus Goes Up To Jerusalem	46
		A Solemn Declaration At The Feast of The Dedication	48
		Jesus Goes Into Peraea	51
		The Narrow Gate and The Closed Door. Those who enter and those who are shut out	52
		The Cunning of Herod and God's Plan	54
		Jesus Dines in the House of a Leader of The Pharisees	56
		What Dispositions are Necessary For Following Jesus	61
		God's Joy in Pardoning Sinners	62
		The Use of Earthly Goods	67
		Unprofitable Servants	75
4	6	The Last Journey Before Going Up To Jerusalem	76
		The Healing of the Ten Lepers	77
		The Kingdom of God Already Come	78
		The Coming of the Son of Man	79
		Persevering Prayer in Time of Persecution	82
		The Pharisee and The Publican	83
		The Indissolubility of The Marriage Bond	85
		Jesus Welcomes The Little Children	92
		The Rich Young Man Whom Jesus Loves Has Not The Courage To Follow Him	93
		It is Very Hard For A Rich Man and Very Easy For One Who Is Voluntarily Poor, To Gain Everlasting Life	94

		The Grace of God and Those Who Murmur Against Grace	96
		The Resurrection of Lazarus	99
		The Definite Resolve To Put Jesus To Death	104
		The Eve of The Great Event	106

5		The Last Preaching of Jesus At Jerusalem	108
5	1	The Last Journey To Jerusalem	108
		The Third Prediction of The Passion and The Resurrection	108
		The sort of ambition to be looked for in those who desire to reign with Jesus	109
		Jesus had come to give His life as a ransom	112
		In the neighborhood of Jericho. The cure of Bartimaeus and another blind man	113
		Jesus in the House of Zachaeus	115
		The Parable of the pounds or talents	116
5	2	Saturday before Palm Sunday	118
		The Anointing at Bethany	118
5	3	Palm Sunday	121
		The Messianic entry of Jesus into Jerusalem	121
		The death of the Messiah is the way to His glory	125
5	4	Monday in Holy Week	128
		The Barren Fig Tree	128
5	5	Tuesday in Holy Week	130
		The withered fig tree and the power of faith	130
		The Source of Jesus' Authority	131
		The parable of the two sons	133

		The parable of the wicked husbandmen	134
		The question of the tribute	138
		Jesus defends the resurrection of the dead against the Sadducees	142
		The Christ is both Son and Lord of David	148
		A warning against the Scribes and Pharisees	149
		Looking back over the ministry of Jesus	153
		The Widow's mite	170
		A twofold warning: the destruction of the Temple and the Coming of the Son of Man	170
		The Discourse on the Destruction of the Temple	176
		Discourse on the coming of the Son of Man	179
		The time of the destruction of the Temple and the time of the coming of the Son of Man	181
		Whatever be the time when the Son of Man shall come, we must watch	184
		The Parable of the wise and foolish virgins	185
		The Last Judgment	187
5	6	Wednesday of Holy Week	189
		The Treachery of Judas	189
5	7	Maundy Thursday	191
		Preparations for the Last Supper	191
		The Paschal Supper	196
		The Prelude to the Supper	198
		Jesus rebukes the disciples for their ambition and washes their feet	199
		Jesus denounces His betrayal. Judas departs.	202
		The Institution of The Eucharist	205
		Jesus who is about to be glorified gives a new commandment	208
		Jesus foretells the scattering of the Apostles and Peter's	209

		denials of Him	
		The days of happiness and the time of great trial	211
		Jesus promises His disciples His presence and that of the Father and the Holy Spirit	211
		Jesus is the True Vine	217
		The World's hatred and the promise of the Holy Ghost	219
		The Office of the Holy Spirit. The speedy return of Jesus. The faith of the disciples.	221
		Christ's prayer for the unity of the Church	226

6		The Passion	230
6	1	Gethsemani	230
6	2	Jesus is judged by the Jews	233
		His arrest	233
		Jesus is led to the house of Annas	236
		Jesus at the house of Caiaphas. Peter's threefold denial	237
		Scenes of Outrage	242
		The Sanhedrin condemns Jesus to death	243
		The despair of Judas	246
6	3	Jesus Before The Judgment Seat of Pilate	248
		Jesus is taken to Pilate	250
		The Jews accuse Jesus before Pilate	251
		Jesus is questioned by Pilate	251
		Jesus before Herod	253
		Barabbas	253
		The scourging	255
		The crowning with thorns	257
		Jesus is condemned to death by Pilate	258
		The way of the cross	259
		The crucifixion. Jesus upon the cross	263

		The death of Jesus	265
		After the death of Christ	273
		The Intervention of Joseph of Arimathaea	275
		Jesus' side is pierced with a spear	276
		Jesus is laid in the tomb	277
		The watch over the tomb	279
7		The Resurrection, Apparitions and Ascension of Christ	282
		The tomb found empty	283
		Apparitions of Christ in Judaea	286
		Apparitions of Christ in Galilee	298
		The Last Appearance in Jerusalem. The Ascension	303
Epilogue		The Gospel of Jesus Christ, God And Man	306
		Jesus of Nazareth, Martyr For Religious Truth	306
		Jesus The Son of God, God Like His Father	319
		The Word Of St. John And The Living Gospel	335

Preaching Chiefly Outside Galilee And The Formation of The Disciples (continued)

IV. From The Feast of Tabernacles To The Going Up To Jerusalem For The Feast Of The Dedication

We do not know how long Jesus stayed at Jerusalem after the feast of Tabernacles. The fourth gospel proceeds to speak of the feast of Dedication immediately after the parable of the Good Shepherd. But it would seem that the two months intervening between these feasts were taken up with preaching the gospel; the chief features of this teaching have been preserved for us by St. Luke. He spreads them over a period of time which elapses between two journeys of Jesus up to Jerusalem; the first of these appears to coincide with that which Jesus made for the feast of Tabernacles, hence the other

51 When the days drew near for him to be received up,^[a] he set his face to go to Jerusalem.^[a]

(Luke IX, 51)

must be His pilgrimage to the Holy City for the feast of the Dedication.

In the whole of this section

22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.(Luke XIII,22)

St. Luke is free of any dependence on St. Mark; indeed there is scarcely anything in common between them. But several passages of St. Luke's narrative are found in St. Matthew, though not in parallel places. We have no information as to the sources used by St. Luke for this section, but it would seem that he learnt but little from such sources as he had concerning the localities in which Jesus worked and taught. At all events there is much less topographical detail here than in the section dealing with the Galilean ministry. He gives us much less information too about the people concerned; we know nothing of their personality, their feelings, their (Page 2) words and behavior. All we know, from St. Luke's very explicit assurance, is that he used reliable sources; and it is probable also that he has arranged the events according to their chronological order, at least in a general way. There are certain hints which lead us to conjecture that the scene is laid in Judaea, though neither St. Mark nor St. Matthew have anything to say about a ministry in Judaea until they come to the events which lead up to the final Pasch. We may therefore regard the whole of this section as an exceedingly valuable supplement to the synoptic narrative provided for us by the third gospel.

Calling of several disciples (151)

Would-Be Followers of Jesus

57 As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." **59** To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." **60** But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." **61** Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." **62** Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke IX, 57-62;

Would-Be Followers of Jesus

18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. **19** And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." **20** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his

head." 21 Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Matthew VIII, 19-22

One might conclude that St Luke has grouped together here these three examples of the calling of disciples in order to throw light on the method Jesus used in inviting men to follow him; or else, if the first step was taken by the future disciple, to show how he subjected them to certain tests. But the setting seems to convey the idea that the Evangelist is recording things just as they happened, for he is dealing with the period which preceded the great mission of the disciples. Hence it is easily comprehensible that Jesus refused to grant any delay at all to those men of good will who offered themselves to him.

It is a fact that these little incidents are linked up in St Luke's narrative with Jesus' journey up to Jerusalem, but we may easily suppose that the Evangelist passed over in silence the stay at the Holy City and resume the thread of his narrative when the Master departed again after the Feast of Tabernacles. Opposition to Him had become more pronounced though on the other hand He had gained a large number of adherents. He had plainly foretold his approaching death: little time was left for Him before the night came if he was to make one last effort for the sake of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Is there any improbability in his sending disciples out into Judea and even Perea? To some scholars the mission of the 72 disciples placed in Galilee has seemed nothing more than a mere repetition of the mission of the Twelve; but it can adequately be accounted for if it be assigned to [\(Page 3\)](#) a district other than Galilee. before proceeding to this step Jesus wishes to gather around him followers of whom we can be sure, men completely devoted to him and resolute in their determination to occupy themselves exclusively with the work of the kingdom of God.

First there comes forward a man whom St. Matthew calls a scribe, which does not mean that he was lacking in sincerity or disinterestedness. He offers himself to Jesus unreservedly: 'I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.' Jesus does not repel him, though He takes care to warn him: 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air, nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head.' By the Son of Man He means Himself, subject as He is to conditions of human life that are sometimes very hard, since He has chosen for Himself the life of a homeless wanderer. It is being alleged against this that at any rate he had the house at Capernaum. But was that really His? More probably it belonged either to Peter or to Matthew. Driven out of Nazareth, disregarded in Galilee, rejected by Samaria, threatened with death at Jerusalem, what chance had He of resting His head anywhere during His passage through Judea except on some clod of Earth beneath the open sky? The evangelists have omitted to tell us whether the enthusiasm of this would-be disciple was strong enough to keep him to his resolve or whether his courage failed.

To another, as once before to St Matthew, Jesus said: 'Follow me!' Matthew had

followed.

9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. **Matthew IX,9**

This man accepts the call, but asks for delay. 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.' There seemed nothing unreasonable in such a demand, for it was sacred duty. Yet it was one of the duties that can be deputed to others in a case of urgent necessity; and perhaps the Master feared lest the man, after having done his duty as a son, might be tempted to fail in his duty as a disciple through attachment to his kinsfolk. It sometimes is the case that a man needs to perform some act of heroism in order to keep himself from failing completely, though more often than not his act of heroism will be understood. (It was dusk in the case of Saint Jeanne de Chantal, who fulfilled her vocation so courageously once she had made sure that her children were provided for.)

The Evangelist omits all (Page 4) mention of such considerations, for they are not needed by one who is convinced of the wisdom and goodness of Our Lord. His own reply suffices: 'Let the dead bury their dead.' The disciple is called to undertake a work that has to do with spiritual life: the affairs of the present life are a sort of death by comparison and those engrossed in these affairs should be left by the disciple to render the services which they willingly do for one another. There was no one to take his place in the work of preaching the kingdom of God. The master therefore gave him a formal command, and doubtless he obeyed it.

There was also a third,

(Proper to St. Luke.)

though we can hardly say that he received the call, who offered himself half-heartedly: 'I will follow thee, Lord; but let me first take leave of them that are at my house.' This too, maybe quite lawful provided that we do not go back on the resolution once formed. Jesus replied with a short parable. Can a man plow a straight furrow if he looks behind instead of keeping his eyes fixed on the mark before him? This man of faltering heart doubtless stayed at home.

The mission of the seventy-two disciples (152-153)

The Mission of the Seventy

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy[a] others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. **2** And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. **3** Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. **4** Carry no purse, no

bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. **5** Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' **6** And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. **7** And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. **8** Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; **9** heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' **10** But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, **11** 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' **12** I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Luke X, 1-12

16 "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

The Return of the Seventy

17 The seventy^[b] returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" **18** And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.^[c] **19** Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. **20** Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke X, 16-20

Jesus was now confident in the dispositions of those whom He was about to send out and could count on their zeal. He appointed seventy-two,

(Possibly the number should be seventy, but we prefer the reading seventy-two.)

among them perhaps some of the Twelve, and gave them the same instructions as he had already given to the Apostles.

(M. Levesque has even concluded from this that both missions took place at the same time. (Nos Quatre Evangiles ..., P 119 ff.)

There is nothing surprising in this, seeing that the object was the same. This object, however, is now expressed in different terms: He 'sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come.' Some have imagined that they served as forerunners to Jesus who followed immediately on their steps in such a way that they all met again at the end of the journey.

(So Fillion in Vie de N.S. Jesus Christ III, ____)

But we can hardly (Page 5) imagine an advance line formed of thirty-five or thirty-six pairs of disciples with Jesus marching behind them, running to and fro from one end of the line to the other and visiting all the places that they had visited. A considerable time would have been necessary for that; nor would the disciples have returned to their Master: He would have rejoined them after a long time. St. Luke does not even say that

they were sent in the same direction. He seems to convey the idea that time pressed. So far only Galilee, including the country on its northern frontier, had received the good news; Jesus was unable to devote as much time to the other districts occupied by the children of Abraham and Jacob as he'd given to Galilee. He therefore sent a large number of disciples because they had to go to several districts at the same time. After their return, then he would set out, passing through the various localities where the disciples had visited the towns and villages. So we may imagine one group spread over Judea, another along the coast passing through Lydda and Jaffa up to Carmel, a third in the land beyond the Jordan.

There were similar disagreements about the place from which they started. Some commentators

(The reason alleged is that the malediction upon the cities of the lakeside, (Luke 10, 13 to 15) is comprehensible only if it were honored before people who have been guilty of despising Grace. It is, of course, evident that these gloomy forebodings were expressed on the shores of the lake, St Matthew has shown Matthew 11:20-ff. But we understood them above (in Volume one page 290) in the sense of a farewell spoken by Jesus at the time when He was about to turn to others who would perhaps be more docile to His teaching, and St. Luke intends no more than that. Seeing that his narrative has now conducted us beyond Samaria on the way to Jerusalem, whither all the gospel preaching leads, it is more simple to suppose that he has put these curses out of their proper order rather than to make the narrative lead Jesus back to the shores of the lake, a supposition that runs counter to St Luke's plan.

A similar thing must be said of the words in which Jesus apostrophizes Jerusalem in Luke 13:34. The Evangelist attaches little importance to the effort to visualize what he describes. Moreover, it is easy to see in the present case that the apostrophizing of the lakeside cities breaks into the continuity of the words addressed to the disciples which are taken up again in verse 16.)

make Jesus returned to Galilee, and suppose that it was either Galilee or Perea which the disciples evangelized. We prefer to think that the departure for the mission occurred somewhere in Judea. St Luke has omitted all mention of our Lord's presence at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles because he thinks of the Holy City merely as the scene of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. Perhaps Bethany, where we shall find him (Page 6) later, was the place where Jesus arranged to meet the disciples again in ten or fifteen days' time. The time of their return could not be settled exactly, nor could it be the same for all, since there would be different routes and delays of varying lengths. It was not St. Luke's intention to show all the disciples coming back to the appointed place together like a regiment of soldiers. He has gathered up into one typical moment and one dominant impression what must in reality have been a number

of very different impressions in the minds of the seventy-two disciples. The disciples returned full of joy, no doubt because of the good reception they had met with, and also because they felt that their words had borne fruit. more especially were they grateful to the Lord for His protection of them. He had given them power to heal the sick, and behold even the devils had been subject to them in Jesus' name.

In this same abridged narrative of the event, which is merely sketched in its general lines, Jesus says to the disciples: 'I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven.' It is the vision of Isaias: 'How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?' But here there is a more sinister radiance, that of the lightning which cleaves the dark clouds and is blotted out on the ground. Satan then has felt the blow and his Dominion is already shaken, for the kingdom of God has begun. But although the disciples had gone before Jesus on this occasion, they will have to carry on his work after him. Hence the Master bestows on them as a permanent gift, the power which they have just used so well. Before sending out his disciples He had already laid the foundations of the hierarchy involving the principle of obedience and discipline by which the church is governed: 'He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me. And he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' When they set out, what the disciples needed most of all was encouragement. On their return He emphasizes the need of self-sacrifice on the part of superiors: they are not to be intoxicated with joy at their success for they have no cause for pride or even for rejoicing at the powers conferred on them: 'But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven.' It is only in heaven that Satan is completely vanquished.

(Page 7) The Revelation of The Father and The Son (154-156)

Jesus Rejoices

21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.^[d] **22** All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

23 Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! **24** For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Luke X, 21-24

Jesus Thanks His Father

25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; **26** yea, Father, for such

was thy gracious will.^[q] **27** All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.^[q] **28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew XI, 25-30

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. **17** Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Matthew XIII, 16-17

The soul of Jesus was rapt in a transport of joy by the thought of these gifts bestowed on His disciples, by their joyful gratitude, and by this auspicious beginning of the kingdom of God. He was already too closely united to the Godhead to feel anything like ecstasy, that rapture of the soul by which it is snatched out of its normal course of life in order to be drawn to God; nevertheless He betrays more than usual the satisfaction and gratitude with which He is filled by the consideration of God's designs. 'He thrilled with joy in the Holy Ghost,' says St. Luke, as though to associate the Holy Spirit with the procession of the Son within the bosom of the Father. Jesus renders homage to the Father, not as to an unknown God whom He is about to reveal for the first time, but to the Lord of heaven and earth adored by Israel, to the one and only God who has created the world as the opening words of the Scripture declare; and He gives Him thanks for having 'hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and revealed them to little ones.'

Had He not spent Himself in the endeavor to enlighten the wise and prudent? But because they thought themselves wise and trusted in their own light, not realizing their blindness, God had abandoned them in order to heal others who indeed were blind but who begged for sight. He had opened their eyes through His Son, to whom everything had been delivered by the Father-all that He knew, all that He could do, all that He was, all that had been committed to His care. And so mysterious is this gift, so exalted is the Person of the Son, that 'no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father,' just as 'no one knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him'; and even then, this revelation is only in the measure in which the mind of man is capable of containing such a secret. According to St. John, Jesus had said after the feast of Tabernacles: '**As my Father knoweth Me, so I too know the Father.**' John X,15 But the words, though very similar to those of Luke and Matthew, were not so emphatic. Strictly speaking, they might be understood (Page 8) as referring to the knowledge the Father has of His chosen instrument the Messiah, distinguished from other men by the fact that He knows God as His Father better than any other knows Him. But Jesus' words in St. Luke and St. Matthew are more explicit in excluding this explanation based merely on the relationship of the Messiah to God; they transport us more distinctly to that transcendent and metaphysical sphere where knowledge is the measure of being, and being is the principle of knowledge. All created beings are shut out from that which is proper to God Himself- the Father's knowledge of the Son and the Son's knowledge of the Father- except in so far as that knowledge is communicated to them by a special gift of the Son revealing the Father.

It has been alleged that these words are 'a meteor fallen from St. John's heaven,' the meaning, of course, being that St. Luke and St. Matthew have drawn the idea from St. John's teaching about the divinity of Jesus. But this overlooks the fact that the fourth gospel was written a considerable time after the other three; consequently we have proof here that St. John's teaching was neither different from that of the others nor new. We may add that it is far too original to be merely a reflection or a development of the teaching found in the Synoptists and St. Paul. No other course was left open, therefore, to the rationalistic critics, disappointed in their attempts to find some commonplace explanation of the words, than to throw doubt on the passage in St. Luke and St. Matthew. But it is so well attested by manuscript tradition and by the versions that not a single editor of the gospels has dared to alter it. It cannot be retouched or forced. It is authentic and it means what it says. That is the essential point. But it will also be observed that it is altogether in keeping with the circumstances: namely, Christ's failure in Galilee and with the Pharisees at Jerusalem, the growing revelation in St. John's gospel, the trustful fidelity and enthusiasm of the disciples, those 'little ones' who have been preferred before the masters in Israel.

To these little ones Jesus now addresses an appeal the like of which never was heard before on the lips of a master teaching his disciples: 'Accept what I teach you, not because I am more learned than you, but because I am meek and humble of heart.' Learned He was- the only (Page 9) one indeed who was learned in the most unfathomable of mysteries. But seeing that God reveals His secrets only to the humble, it was not fitting that He should give them a teacher who was proud of his learning. It is by meekness and gentleness that Jesus disposes men's minds to receive His teaching. That teaching is nevertheless a yoke and a burden; it is not a mere matter of idle speculation, but a doctrine to be put into practice by amendment of life, repentance, and self-denial. All this He had already declared most emphatically. But at the same time His yoke is easy and His burden light, and they who are weary of striving in vain to perform the crushing and heavy observances imposed on them by the wise and prudent will find rest with this meek and humble Master.

But the disciples, full of supernatural joy though they were, did they know how to set the true value on such graces? Jesus bids them to think well on this. The prophets and saintly kings of the past were blessed in the eyes of all, enshrined as they were in the Scriptures and praised by the Holy Ghost. And yet all their greatness really sprang from the desire which filled their hearts to see and hear the things that these little ones were now seeing and hearing.

Charity towards our neighbor. The parable of the Good Samaritan (157-158)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" **27** And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." **28** And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30** Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, **34** and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii^g and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" **37** He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke X, 25-37

All had heard Jesus announcing that the kingdom of God was about to come on earth. They were aware that the purpose of this kingdom was to lead men to eternal life; on this point the teaching of Jesus was at one with that of the Pharisees. But at the same time He demanded a righteousness greater than that of the Pharisees, while He freed people from the obligation of adopting the observance which they had added to the Law. Would He have the temerity to promulgate new commandments or to abrogate the ancient ones? A scribe or doctor of the Law came forward; and although he did not give utterance to so outrageous a suspicion as that, yet he wished to assure himself that Jesus had no such intention. He demands therefore of the young Master with an aspect of docility: 'Master ([Page 10](#)) what must I do to possess eternal life?' He raises the question of observance. Without any hesitation Jesus refers him to the Law, as much as to ask who could dream of seeking an answer anywhere else? 'What is written in the Law?' As though discussing a problem of exegesis with a fellow student. He adds: 'How readest thou?'

The scribe accepts this polite invitation to display his erudition and at once quotes the Scripture with amazing aptness; for along with the passage concerning the love of God

5 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Deuteronomy VI,5

which it was the duty of every Jew to recite twice a day, he quotes the command about loving our neighbor.

18 You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. Leviticus XIX,18

This combination of texts is not found in the rabbinical writings, and one might be

tempted to see in it the hand of St. Luke , attributing to a scribe the doctrine which Our Lord promulgates in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark

18 You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. **Matthew XXII, 34-40**

The First Commandment

28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" **29** Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; **30** and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." **32** And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that he is one, and there is no other but he; **33** and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." **34** And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any question.

Mark XII, 28-24

as a thing conceded by all, and thus providing a foundation on which to build a fuller teaching. The scribe recites as the commandment which lies at the base of all the rest: 'Thous shalt love the Lord the God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.' That was Christ's own mind, and He therefore replies: 'Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live.'

Questioned thus with apparent sincerity, Jesus fulfilled His office as teacher authoritatively, not leaving anything for ill-will to lay hold of. But the man was unwilling to be dismissed like a schoolboy who has answered satisfactorily; after all, his question was not so easily answered as that. It may be that he thought Jesus, in deciding the matter so simply, had failed to see the serious difficulty contained in the solution even though it might be accepted in principle as satisfactory. He therefore asks: 'And who is my neighbor?' Scripture had taught the Jews in the first place to look on every fellow-Israelite as a neighbor, in so far as he was descended from Abraham. But it was realized that during the centuries that had gone by since the days of Abraham other races had mixed with Israel. Strangers had come to dwell in the land among the children of Abraham, living in the same life as they. Were they also to be regarded as neighbors? Must some modification be made on their behalf in that narrow law common to all [\(Page 11\)](#) peoples of the ancient world, that every foreigner is an enemy and not a neighbor? True, owing to the conquests of Alexander the Great, which had caused the decline of the Greek city-states and owing also to the influence of the Stoic philosophers, there had been a widening of that old narrow idea which regarded each man as a citizen of some city; the world had come to be regarded as the city of all men. But that had not prevented wars from breaking out again, as cruel as ever before, nor slavery from becoming more harsh. In face of this the philosophers were

powerless, nor did they really care. The new principle of solidarity among men, therefore, was nowhere admitted in practice; and it had not even penetrated among the Jews. Try as they may, modern Jewish scholars have failed to discover in all their ancient literature anything that really resembles love for all men irrespective of race and country. If Jesus was not the first to proclaim the solidarity of all men, He was at all events the first to interpret the words of the Law in that sense and so bring it to perfection. Nay, more, He was absolutely the first to give vitality and fruitfulness to a theoretical principle which had remained a dead letter so long as love of one's neighbor had not been linked up with the love of God, which is the true fount of brotherly love.

Jesus answered this question, 'And who is my neighbor?' with a parable, thus following His custom of giving picturesque and concrete answers even to questions dealing with matters of the most sublime character. The theme of the parable was provided for Him by the dangers that beset the road leading to Jericho, along which dwellers at Jerusalem could hardly venture without fear of being robbed. In all probability the dialogue between Jesus and the scribe took place on one of the hills overlooking the Holy City, whence can plainly be seen at a spot half-way between Jerusalem and Jericho, a mass of rock stained red by oozings of manganese. On this account the Israelites called the place 'Ascent of Redness,' or as Arabs have interpreted it, 'Ascent of Blood.'

7 and the boundary goes up to Debir from the Valley of Achor, and so northward, turning toward Gilgal, which is opposite the ascent of Adum'mim, which is on the south side of the valley; and the boundary passes along to the waters of En-she'mesh, and ends at En-ro'gel; Joshua XV, 7, 'Ascent of Adommin'

It was a regular den of thieves.

Jesus relates that a man was going down to Jericho, which lies at a level nearly four thousand feet lower than Jerusalem. The road crosses the desert, and nothing was easier than for the Bedouin who made their camps in the surrounding (Page 12) valleys to waylay travelers. They did not kill them, they merely stripped and beat them if they showed signs of resistance. This is what had happened to the traveler in the parable, who was robbed of his purse and beat and left half dead on the ground. There came a priest, and then a Levite; but they pass by very quickly. As they lived on tithes they ought to have shown themselves more charitable than others, for those who fed them were certainly their neighbors, but they do not even look to see whether the wounded man is an Israelite. Then comes a Samaritan the member of that tiny nation hated by the Jews more than any other, and hating the Jews in return with no less vehemence. He does not stop to consider that the place is none too safe; he is not afraid of losing time; he does not grudge the trouble. Traveling far from home he has wine and oil in his saddle-bag and these he pours into the wounds, bandaging them as well as he can. He puts the wounded man on his own beast and is content to go slowly, supporting him the while as best he may. When they come to the inn- perhaps one which marked the halfway point on the route to Jericho and still pointed out under the

name of the khan of the Good Samaritan- he still looks after his patient. He would be unlikely to have much money with him for fear of robbers; but at any rate he takes two pence from his girdle, which represents the wage for two days' work; he will pay the rest on his return. And Jesus ends: 'Which of these three, in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?'

The question is not worded as we should have expected. Our neighbor, according to the question raised at the beginning, is he to whom we should show mercy. The application here inverts the roles; that is one of the surprises of the Semitic parable. The meaning, however, is perfectly plain. Do you wish to know who is your neighbor? Ask each of these three men. The first two are not much concerned about the matter, but the third, the Samaritan, he will tell you. Your neighbor is whosoever is in need of your help, whatsoever be his race or creed. In case of need, everyone is our neighbor, and we are his neighbor too. The scribe made no mistake: he who realized who was his neighbor was the man who showed charity. And Jesus said: 'Go, and do thou also in a like manner.' This simple dialog establishes a date in the history of humanity.

Mary and Martha (159) [\(Page 13\)](#)

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. **39** And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. **40** But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." **41** But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; **42** one thing is needful.[¶] Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." Luke X,38-42

The parable of the Good Samaritan suggest the neighborhood of Jerusalem, for the ascent of blood is seen from there but not from Jericho. The Charming episode of the Two Sisters Martha and Mary, is situated in the same locality. St Luke, the teller of the story, from its to give the name of their Village, but Martha and Mary are surely the same as those of whom St John speaks

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain man was ill, Laz'arus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

John XI,1

and who dwelt at Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem.

At the time at which this episode took place Jesus was engaged in His apostolic journey. It would seem, according to St Luke's arrangement, to a point after the return of the 72; but, on the other hand, it may be that he has narrated their return immediately after their mission in order to be done with the subject, keeping what Jesus had done in the interval to be narrated afterwards.

The Master enters a house where he is already known and loved. It passed as Martha's house, doubtless because she was the elder of the two sisters, perhaps also because her character and capability had made others regard her as the mistress of the house. It is she, therefore, who undertakes the duties which hospitality demands, duties looked on as sacred in the East, and attention to these did not permit of her remaining in the company of her guests. The reason of His coming was to speak the Good Word to them and He gave himself wholly to that task, while Mary sat at his feet and listened. Martha was full of energy and would have been able to do all the work required without help. But she wondered whether her sister realize the importance of this Duty, saying that Mary was not offering to help, just as though the work would get done of itself. She manifests a familiarity which proves that she has known Jesus for a long time when she seeks to assure herself that he is more conscious than her sister of all the trouble she is taking: 'Lord, hast thou no care that my sister has left me alone to serve? Speak to her, therefore, that she help me.' In this the worthy Martha went a little too far, for her eagerness was turning into criticism. But our Lord answered kindly: 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful (Page 14) and are troubled about many things, whereas few things are necessary or even only one.' Does he mean that bread by itself would be sufficient for the meal she is preparing, or is he speaking of the word, which is the essential nourishment of the soul? As for making Mary share Martha's work, useful as it is, our Lord refuses to do that: for Mary has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her. This good part, the best part, was to draw very close to Jesus to hear the words he spoke to her heart.

(The text that we follow here, the one guaranteed by the best authorities, give substantially the same sense as that of the Vulgate: 'But one thing is necessary, Martha has chosen the best part...' Even if we adopt the wording of the Vulgate, the meaning is not that the contemplative life is the one thing necessary, but that, as salvation is the one thing necessary, we should first of all make sure of it by hearing the word of God. Whatever reading we adopt, there is something that must be understood which is not expressed. The best authenticated text is also the one most in keeping with the situation and the most subtle in meaning.)

And so great is the authority of our Savior's least word that the church has always considered that a life spent in listening to the word of God by reading, meditation, and prayer is higher than the mere practice of good works. More especially has She understood that union with God In prayer must be the principle of the active life; if that be present then everything is in good order. However, the superiority of the particular form of life does not necessarily imply greater sanctity in those who adopt it: he is most loved who loves most.

The Our Father (160)

The Lord's Prayer

11 He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." **2** And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **3** Give us each day our daily bread;^[a] **4** and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation."

LukeXI, 1-4

7 "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this:

Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

10

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

11

Give us this day our daily bread;^[a]

12

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;

13

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.📖

14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; **15** but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew VI, 7-15

Leaving the house of Martha and Mary, Jesus continued his journey in company with the most intimate of his disciples. After a time He stopped in order to pray, and the sight of Him caused his disciples to remark to one another: 'How he prays!' They wondered why he had not taught them to pray as John had taught his disciples. When Jesus had finished, therefore, they complained of this to Him, and He more than granted their request in teaching them the Our Father. Such is the way in which Saint Luke introduces The Lord's Prayer,

(St. Matthew has placed the Lord's Prayer in The Sermon on the Mount but it is easy to see that it forms an addition to the original texture of the discourse.)

and it has every appearance of being a statement of fact. It teaches us that (Page 15) We must begin with the request if we would learn how to pray. There is no reason why we should not add to this lesson the warning contained in St Matthew about the unsuitability of vain repetition in prayer.

The apostles no doubt expected Jesus to teach them a long prayer, at any rate as long as the Jewish daily prayer with its 18 benedictions.

(Composed later than the year a.d. 70, but the elements of it were in existence before that date.)

There is no need to speak of the flood of words used by the Heathen to inform the gods of their Petty interests and to gain them over to their side. Our father is well aware of our necessities. There for a short form of words is enough to give glory to God and beseech him for such help as all men need. Not only are surely personal desires passed over in Silence by the prayer Jesus taught, but even that exceedingly Earnest and moving supplication which the Jews made on behalf of Israel is omitted. As Charity ought to embrace all men, so the prayer is deemed to be uttered by all the faithful speaking as one to the one true God, who is the father of them all. Thus they are to say:

(We follow the text according to St. Matthew, which is the one adopted for use by the church. St. Luke omits the third petition and the latter part of the six, perhaps because they are merely complementary to what has proceeded. Moreover, St Luke's terminology is not so near to a Semitic original as St. Matthews, we are led to conclude

that the former's version is an abridgment rather than that the latter's is an expansion of the original, more especially as St. Matthew's six petitions plus an invocation form the perfect number seven.)

'Our Father, Who Art in Heaven': not our Master, nor our King, but our father; whose dwelling place is higher than our thoughts can reach, or rather it is within our souls where thou abidest;

'Hallowed be thy name': may all men acknowledge Thee to be infinite perfection and the source of every perfection;

'Thy kingdom come'; that is to say, that bountiful outpouring of Thy Grace which we look for from Thee;

'Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in heaven': for the establishment and extension of thy kingdom or according to the measure in which we obey Thy will;

'Give us this day our daily bread': both the bread that feeds the body and the bread that nourishes the soul;

'And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors': that is to say, not, forgive us our trespasses in proportion as (Page 16) we forgive-which would be a piece of insolent and foolish bargaining-but, forgive us because we forgive others;

'And lead us not into temptation': May Thy providence always ready to hear our prayer, never forsake us in the snare of simple occasions which threaten us in our weakness;

'But deliver us from evil: both from physical evil, which saddens and weighs us down unless by Thy help we are led to abandon ourselves wholly to Thee; and from moral evil save us by Thy light, by forgiveness, and Thy protection.

First an uplifting of the heart towards our Father. Then three desires uttered by a soul united to that Father by the bonds of friendship and animated by the desire for his good: the soul's good is the outpouring of the Father's good and returns to Him again in glory. There follow three petitions expressing our need and the weakness which seeks strength in God. Such is this prayer. It takes for granted all the revelation of the Old Testament, a revelation which Jesus had not come to annul but to complete and set free from the restrictions imposed on it by a narrow and scornful spirit of nationalism. Individually, the Jews were far superior to the Gentiles by their faith in God and their sense of the inestimable value of the blessings of a religion; but when the Jews prayed, they prayed as a nation, and after the death of Jesus the nation was to add to his prayer a special so-called blessing which had for its object to call down curses on the followers of Christ.

(Schurer, *Geschichte des judischen Volkes*, 4 ed.II,p.543; the Hebrew text of the prayer will be found in *Le Messianisme ...* , p.338 ff.)

The prayer that's taught by our Lord is the prayer of the church, and the church knows neither Jew nor Gentile; she blesses nation and family alike, Desiring that all may be the children of one and the same father.

It may be asked where Jesus taught his disciples this prayer. As early as the fourth century the faithful venerated a site on the Mount of Olives as the spot where he had taught, and a beautiful great basilica, called that Eleana from the name of the hill, was built there to commemorate the fact. But it was chiefly his eschatological discourse that they commemorated in this place, for that discourse was explicitly referred to the Mount of Olives by the synoptic evangelists. It is probable, however, that they (Page 17) included the Pater Noster in that discourse, as was done by commentators in the 9th century. And now once more that prayer will again be heard in the Basilica that is being built there as a votive offering to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a monument intended to mark the reconciliation of the nations after the Great War.

(The chief promoters of this plan were the Visitandines of Toulouse. The crypt was blessed on September 28th, 1927. For the ancient Basilica see: Jerusalem by Vincent and Abel, Volume 2, page 375 ff.)

Prayer always heard (161-162)

Perseverance in Prayer

5 And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for[b] a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke XI, 5-13

Ask, Search, Knock

7 "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! 12 So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew

VII, 7-11

It is necessary to know how we ought to pray. But in addition to knowing what we ought to ask of God, we must also firmly believe that prayer is efficacious; and if prayer is what it ought to be, it will always be heard. This further lesson is rightly in place after the first. We are not to imagine that our formula of prayer exercises a sort of compulsion over God, no matter what be the object of our prayer. That would be to look on prayer rather as a magical rite than as an act of religion. St. Luke has therefore arranged this teaching in excellent order, and it is very likely that it is the order Jesus Himself followed in teaching His disciples.

(A little later, the mention of bread and fish may tempt one to think that the scene is laid by the lake of Tiberias. But Galileans must have found it very natural to use such an example anywhere.)

In his easy and familiar way He solves the problem which is a worry to the philosophers: does God pay heed to our prayers? Is it possible that He, who in His infinite wisdom determined all things with finality, will change His plan at the demand of an insignificant creature? Is divine omnipotence at our command? These are questions which Jesus does not answer. All can be reconciled by goodness; that is the secret. And Jesus knows we can count on the goodness of God. Men sometimes hear even an inopportune request: how much readier than men is God to hear us! Jesus throws light on this by a parable.

Night has fallen. The good man has fastened his door. His wife has spread mats and bed-coverings on the floor. They and their children have retired to rest, the children perhaps lying near the door. Someone knocks, and a conversation is heard through the chinks of the door. 'Friend' (Page 18) says the visitor, 'lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me and I have not what to set before him.' It is a loan that is never refused among poor people. But now the children are asleep, and the good man will have to move the bedding from the bread bin and the door. that will mean disturbing the sleepers. Really the neighbor is unreasonable, and what does he mean by traveling so late at night? But the neighbor who is begging on behalf of another goes on knocking; the harm is done; everyone is awake already, or soon will be he had better be given what he wants and sent away. new paragraphs no moral is drawn, nor has the name of God so much as mentioned. Are we attribute to God such Petty feelings as those of this man who is so slow to oblige his friend and who finally gives what is a Stoneleigh in order that he may be left in peace? That such a thing is that, the philosophers complain more loudly than ever. Cut her heart tells us what is meant: insistent, unwavering prayer is irresistible. We understand, of course, that God does not give way for the sake of Peace we learn from his son, who knows the father so well, that when he seems death to our entreaties it is only to make us persevere in the prayer that is so beneficial to us. For every prayer is heard. Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be open to you. Ask, seek, knock.; these are indispensable conditions. Prayer, therefore is necessary. But is

it as efficacious? in the world of men we often ask without obtaining what we ask, we seek and we do not find, we knock on the door remains firmly closed. It is not so with God. Those who pray are his children; they are speaking to their father.

‘What man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will reach him a serpent?’ Or a scorpion instead of an egg? And yet you could hardly be called good! ‘If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?’ That is, St Luke explains, He will give the Holy Spirit, who is pouring into us in the measure in which we pray so as to make us like our father. It is goodness which gives itself, the goodness in which we put our trust. Can all that be reconciled with the unchangeableness of God? Certainly (Page 19)He is unchangeable, but His unchangeable purpose was not settled without the counsel of his Divine goodness.

Number 163 in the Synopsis contains two miracles related by St. Matthew as taking place in Galilee. They provide two examples of Our Savior's goodness but need no special comment. Precisely the same characteristics are found here and in number 225.

The casting out of a devil. The slander of the Pharisees (164-167)

(Number 163 in the Synopsis contains two miracles related by St. Matthew as taking place in Galilee. They provide two examples of Our Savior's goodness but need no special comment. Precisely the same characteristics are found here and in number 225.)

Jesus and Beelzebul

14 Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. **15** But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Be-el'zebul, the prince of demons”; **16** while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. **17** But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and house falls upon house. **18** And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul. **19** And if I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. **20** But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. **21** When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; **22** but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. **23** He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

The Return of the Unclean Spirit

24 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ **25** And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. **26** Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself,

and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.” Luke XI,14-26;

10 And every one who speaks a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Luke XII,10

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Be-el'zebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” **23** And he called them to him, and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. **27** But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man; then indeed he may plunder his house.

28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” — **30** for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.” Mark III,22-30

Jesus and Beelzebul

22 Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. **23** And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” **24** But when the Pharisees heard it they said, “It is only by Be-el'zebul,^[b] the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” **25** Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; **26** and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? **27** And if I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. **28** But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. **29** Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. **30** He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. **31** Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.^[c] **32** And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. Matthew XII, 22-32

The Return of the Unclean Spirit

43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but he finds none. **44** Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. **45** Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation.” Matthew XII,43-45

The instruction on prayer was interrupted by the arrival of a groups of people who brought to Jesus a man who was both dumb and blind. Blindness never seems to have been attributed to demoniacal influence; thus St. Matthew says that Jesus healed this man, giving him back his sight,

22 Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. **Matthew 12:22**

And at the same time drove out the devil who, according to St. Luke,

14 Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. **Luke 11:14**

was the cause of the man's being dumb. We see here, then, and more clearly than in the case of the epileptic above, an instance of sickness and possession affecting one and the same person. The scribes who have come down from Jerusalem

A detail added by Mark 3:22

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Be-el'zebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."

which forms a valuable point of agreement with St. John, although Mark seems to have placed this incident much earlier than Matthew and Luke.

Far from offering thanks for this great favor bestowed by Jesus, take advantage of it to say again that they have recently so maliciously said at the feast of Tabernacles, namely that Jesus is possessed by the devil. This devil, they now say is Beelzebul the prince of devils; it is he who has given Jesus power to cast out devils, these being thus obliged to obey their master.

The insult would have been an abominable one had it been spoken in the heat of dispute; but put forward thus, in answer to an act of goodness on Jesus' part, it was inspired by a sort of cold venom. They do not even say 'Satan' the adversary, a name that at any rate possessed a certain grandeur; but they speak of 'Beelzebul' in order to express their contempt. It was, in fact, a name they themselves had invented with ingenuous malice and subtlety. Baal or Beelzebub,

Either meaning the god of flies or of some place named Zebub. Probably there was also a play upon words in the choice of the name 'god of flies' for Satan. In Aramaic 'Lord of flies' meant 'Lord of enmity.'

the god worshiped at Accaron, they ([Page 20](#)) pronounced Beelzebul, which in Aramaic then spoken means 'the god of dung.' This insulting nickname of the prince of devils was the name they connected with Jesus.

Such a violent attack as this, made as it was by persons credited with such personal authority as that of the Scribes, was of a character to turn even men of good will from Jesus. It was with the Scribes then, that He would have to deal. He bids them come forward and, calling Satan by his proper name, He asks sharply: 'How can Satan cast out Satan?'

Mark 3: 23- 23 And he called them to him, and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan?

Is it thus that things are done in the political or social order? There all division means destruction; when a kingdom becomes prey to civil war, when the members of a family are divided,

(Luke has turned the two similes into one by using the image of a ruined kingdom in which two houses are falling one upon the other.

it is all over with that kingdom and that house. Do you suppose that Satan is casting out Satan and fighting against himself? That would be equivalent to working for the end of his own sway over men. If we think he is defeated, then he is indeed already defeated, for his empire over men is due to his prestige and the fear he inspires.

Such was the common view of the matter in the minds of the Jews; they attached great importance to exorcisms, and to drive out Beelzebul was considered a triumph. Were the Scribes going to assert that their followers were mistaken in so thinking? Hardly. And yet, whatever they may say to justify themselves will be nothing less than a condemnation of their own slander against Jesus. There are only two powers: the kingdom of God and the tyranny of Satan. Satan cannot be overthrown except by the power of God or in the Spirit of God. Therefore, if Jesus casts out so many devils- and that without the aid of elaborate formulas of exorcism- it means that God is working in him with greater power, and that the kingdom of God has already begun. For if Satan allows himself to be defeated little by little, so to say, if his conquests are thus wrested from him, if he is driven from the places where he is established, it means that he is already vanquished. Jesus makes that plain by the use of a very simple example, again taken from the ordinary sphere: ‘How can anyone enter into the house of a strong man and rifle his goods unless he first bind the strong man? And then he will (Page 21) rifle his house.

29 Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. Matthew 12:29. His expression is more Vivid and probably nearer the original than marks, while Luke has thrown the passage into a literary form.

Hence Satan is already defeated; that is God's purpose in sending his son into the world. What remains to be done is that this defeat should be followed up. The mission of the 72 had been an important moment in that campaign, when Satan had fallen from heaven like lightning.

Luke 10:18 18 And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.^[g]

The conflict then had begun, and it was necessary to take sides. The Master had ordered His disciples to deal gently with those who took it upon themselves to invoke His name in exorcisms, even though they had not become His disciples.

Another Exorcist

38 John said to him, “Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name,^[g] and we forbade him, because he was not following us.” **39** But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. **40** For he that is not against us is

for us. **41** For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward. Mark 9: 38-40

Another Exorcist

49 John answered, "Master, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." **50** But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you."

Luke 9: 49-50

Very different from these were the Scribes in their attitude. Of them it could truly be said: 'He that is not with Me is against Me.' Those who do not join with Jesus in order to gather along with Him, they scatter instead of gathering.

30 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. Matthew 12:30

23 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. Luke 11:23

It is possible that this saying was uttered on some other occasion. It is not in Mark, nor does it flow from the context.

After giving this warning, which was capable of being applied to other circumstances also, Jesus points out forcibly how serious is the position in which the Scribes have put themselves by their attitude towards Him: 'Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they blaspheme; but whoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin.' These are mysterious words, and they are very difficult to explain.

If Jesus wished to say that all sins are forgivable except the sin against the Holy Spirit, why did he not put it in that very simple way? We, with our strict logic, would express it in that way. But Jesus thought has much finer shades of meaning and is considering the souls attitude towards God. He declares that all sins are forgiven, and even all blasphemies; hence there is a sort of paradox in afterwards making exception for a single sin, and such a paradox invites his hearers to reflect. All sins are forgiven, on condition, of course, that the sinner asks for forgiveness. No Israelite could have any doubt about the necessity of repentance. If, therefore, there is a sin which is never forgiven, does not this mean that the sin, of its very nature ([Page 22](#)) and so long as it lasts, shuts out repentance? That is how the church understands the matter, and it is certainly the meaning of the text. Such a sin is the act of one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit; it is a direct and deliberate sin of open enmity, which bursts all the bonds between the soul and God. The Holy Spirit here does not stand for the third person of the Holy Trinity so much as for God's Readiness to forgive. When the psalmist praised God to forgive him his sin, he says: 'Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.'

Psalm I:13 (in Hebrew li).

So long as he has not blaspheme Divine Mercy, even though he be a sinner, he has not cast off all contact with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the soul from sin. Thus John the Baptist had pointed to Jesus' baptism, which was really to take away sin, as baptism in the Holy Spirit. Hence he who

blasphemes the Holy Ghost does not deserve forgiveness and, St Mark says, 'is guilty of an everlasting sin'; which means that he is fixed forever, and forever answerable for the blaspheme to which he has committed himself. It is this disposition which is the cause of his sin never being forgiven; it cannot be, for once the sinner seeks the help of God's goodness he thereby ceases to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. Hence it is possible for the scribes themselves, even after the gross insult, to obtain pardon. Meanwhile, however, Jesus gives them this warning precisely because of their willful blindness and the peril of final impenitence which threatens them; For St. Mark says: 'Because they said: 'He hath an unclean spirit.' To attribute the work of the Holy Ghost, the cause of all purity and the source of pardon and life, to the chief of the devils who is the unclean spirit par excellence, was to blaspheme the Holy Ghost and put oneself beyond the scope of pardon. Jesus made a point of telling the scribes

Only in Matthew and Luke; but there is no reason for questioning the authenticity of the saying. Who would have dared to add it to the Gospel?

that God was ready to forgive things set against the son of man, that is our Lord himself, who had been sent by the father to obtain pardon for men by their sacrifice of His life. It might have been asked whether blasphemies against the Son of Man did not also put a sinner outside the way of salvation and in danger of eternal death. But St Paul was in such case, and yet he became an apostle. Others can be like [\(Page 23\)](#) Him, provided they do not persist in denying and blaspheming the Divine prerogative of Mercy.

Availing himself of the sensation aroused by the expulsion of the devil's, Jesus referred to the audacity with which the evil spirits behave in order to teach a very useful lesson to his hearers. It cannot be pointed out too often that the chief obstacle to the kingdom of God preached by our Lord was the pride of the religious leaders of the people, consisting in a feeling of self satisfaction and contentment with their moral state which ran completely counter to the spirit of repentance, a spirit which he demanded as a necessary preliminary to the kingdom of God. Men come to bring pardon, but men had to ask for; and in order to ask for it they had the first of all to acknowledge their sinfulness. but the Jews considered that they were not sinners like the Gentiles. Were they not established in the very House of God which is now being cleansed from a former wickedness and adorned with Divine favors?

They ought to have known that the enemy of mankind never lays aside his arms. Though he may be driven off, he nevertheless returns to the attack, and the ensuing defeat is all the more sad. The master might have drawn a comparison from what happens in human affairs when a nation, at first beaten, makes energetic preparations and overcomes its enemies who have become enervated and too confident in their own strength. But he chose rather to show them a picture of an evil spirit, who has taken possession of a man and established a dwelling within him. The fact that a man is possessed does not of itself imply that he has been guilty of sin. Hence in this picture we are not given a description of a sinner reconciled first by repentance and enriched by grace, then falling back through his own fault into more serious crimes than before. Our Savior is rather drawing attention to the indomitable energy of an adversary whom nothing can disconcert. Driven out of a house where he was comfortably settled, he is reduced to taking refuge in places without water, such as the Desert of Judea which the listeners probably have before their eyes. There he finds no pleasant place of shelter.

Inspired by longing to recover his former ease, he returns, keeps watch, and sees that the house which he had left in disorder has now been swept and furnished. It is empty. He goes and finds seven villains worse than himself, and there they establish [\(Page 24\)](#) themselves as masters. The poor possessed man, represented by the house, is worse off than before.

So will it be, conclude St. Matthew, with this sinful generation. At that very moment, Satan, angered by the victory which Jesus was gaining over him, was making a last assault upon the house of Israel. Up to the present it had escaped him, at least by comparison with the pagan world over which he exercised dominion. Since Israel would not realize its danger and do penance, its fate would be worse than before. At the voice of the prophets it had been horrified by the thought of the idolatries committed in the past; but now lulled into a false sense of security by its teachers, not even the thunderclap of punishment would arouse it from its spiritual torpor.

The blessedness of the mother of Jesus 168

True Blessedness

27 As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" **28** But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Luke 11: 27-28

All that we have just seen is full of sadness and gloom; now we see the sun breaking through again. Women show more boldness than men in siding with those who have been wronged. They obey the bidding of their hearts and are more outspoken. One of the women present is full of admiration at the calm manifested by Jesus and at the composure of His replies, those words of His which so completely control the situation and which threaten merely in order to lead the hearers to change of heart. With admirable simplicity she thinks how honored she would be if she were the mother of such a son, who might well be the Messiah. 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee,' she cries, 'and the breasts that gave thee suck.' But Jesus, quick to turn attention from Himself so as to focus it upon the object of His mission, replies: 'Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it!'

He does not reject the congratulations addressed to his mother; rather He makes everyone who is of good will a sharer in those congratulations. The Church has adopted the woman's words for her own use; when she speaks of the Mother of Jesus she calls her the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church also judges that Mary was less blessed in having given birth to Jesus In the flesh than in having been so [\(Page 25\)](#) faithful a virgin, endowed with that indescribable holiness which was becoming for one who was to be the mother of God.

The Sign of Jonah

29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. **30** For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nin'evah, so will the Son of man be to this generation. **31** The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. **32** The men of Nin'evah will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. Luke 11:29-32

The Sign of Jonah

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." **39** But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. **40** For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. **41** The men of Nin'evah will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. **42** The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. Matthew 12: 38-42

Gradually a great crowd of people had gathered around Jesus and his adversaries. The most hostile of his adversaries had been reduced to silence, feeling themselves completely defeated by the intervention of this unknown woman who had so courageously taken the Masters part in face of their calumnies. Nothing delights a crowd so much as a quick, spontaneous retort. It had cleared the air. There were present, however, a number of scribes who, although less prejudiced than their companions, thought themselves entitled to sit in judgment upon Jesus' mission; these begin again

See Vol I page 252.

to ask him to give proof of his mission by showing some sign in the sky, as Samuel had brought thunder and rain in the season of the wheat harvest,

16 And when all Israel saw that the king did not hearken to them, the people answered the king,

"What portion have we in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel!

Look now to your own house, David."

First Dynasty: Jeroboam Reigns over Israel

So Israel departed to their tents. **17** But Rehobo'am reigned over the people of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. **18** Then King Rehobo'am sent Ador'am, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehobo'am made haste to mount his chariot,

to flee to Jerusalem. **19** So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. **20** And when all Israel heard that Jerobo'am had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21 When Rehobo'am came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehobo'am the son of Solomon. **22** But the word of God came to Shemai'ah the man of God: **23** "Say to Rehobo'am the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, **24** 'Thus says the Lord, You shall not go up or fight against your kinsmen the people of Israel. Return every man to his home, for this thing is from me.'" So they hearkened to the word of the Lord, and went home again, according to the word of the Lord.

Jeroboam's Golden Calves

25 Then Jerobo'am built Shechem in the hill country of E'phraim, and dwelt there; and he went out from there and built Penu'el. **26** And Jerobo'am said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David; **27** if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehobo'am king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehobo'am king of Judah." **28** So the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods,^[a] O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." **29** And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. **30** And this thing became a sin, for the people went to the one at Bethel and to the other as far as Dan.^[a] **31** He also made houses on high places, and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. **32** And Jerobo'am appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices upon the altar; so he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. **33** He went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the people of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense. I Kings 12, 16-ff

and Elias had made fire fall from the heavens,

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 1 Kings 18:38

or later punish the land with a 3 years drought which he had brought to an end by his prayer.

17 ^[a]Now Eli'jah the Tishbite, of Tishbe^[b] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 1 Kings 17:1

45 And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezre'el. 1 Kings 18:45

when asked on a former occasion Jesus had bluntly refused to give a sign from heaven. His determination is still the same, but now it is His desire to explain more clearly to this generation which is never satisfied that His words and miracles are signs enough, and that his hearers are gravely to blame for stubbornly shutting their eyes to the significance of this sign. To pretend to see the work of the devil in these miracles, especially in the driving out of the demons, was to exceed the normal limits of human malice. But when the day of judgment came, they would have to render an account of their failure to recognize a divine sign in that wholly divine life which Jesus led.

St. Matthew dwells on the following point of resemblance between Jonas and Jesus: as Jonas remained in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so Jesus will be in the heart of the earth. But it is not that which constitutes the sign of which Jesus is speaking at the moment, for He speaks of a sign that has already been given and ought to be understood. Later on the Resurrection was to be the chief sign of all, and that is doubtless why Matthew speaks of it here. Vol 2,-c

it was thus that Jonas (page 26) had served as a sign for the idolatrous Ninivites, who had obeyed his preaching and done penance. Yet He who now spoke in the very midst of Israel was greater than Jonas. The Queen of Sheba had come from the ends of the earth to render homage to the wisdom of Solomon, merely at the rumor of him. And He who was speaking to them was wiser than Solomon. But they remained deaf to the words of life, their eyes were closed to the evidence of His miracles; they wanted signs of their own choosing. That was equivalent to what has been done in our own days: summoning God to work miracles before the scientific societies. God works miracles out of goodness, in order to enlighten men of good will; He does not allow Himself to be summoned before a bench of experts.

Jesus is the light. How can we receive that light (170)

The Light of the Body

33 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. **34** Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. **35** Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. **36** If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light." Luke 11:33-36

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. **15** Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5: 14-16

The Sound Eye

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; **23** but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! Matthew 6:22-23

The true sign then had been given, but men refused to accept it. When God sent Jesus as a light into the world, it was certainly not in order that the light be put under a bushel, but on a candlestick so that it might enlighten every man that cometh into the world. Then why did people not see it? Because it is not enough that the light should shine; the eye must be healthy in order to see it. If the eye is sound it gives the whole body the benefit of light; if it be diseased, a man will think that he is in the dark. Such was the state of the Pharisees, men who were ill-disposed towards the light; Jesus draws attention to the source of their error and thus bids them to think. Persuading themselves that they have light within themselves, they shut their eyes to the veritable light and so remain in darkness. In this way, by the use of homely comparisons which hover on the border line separating the world of sense from the world of spiritual realities and throw light on God's designs, Jesus propounds the mystical doctrine later handed down to us by St. John in a series of more clear-cut formulas. Jesus is the light, but a

light that first must be desired, a light that grows in the measure that a man strips himself of false knowledge and exposes himself to its rays, while it is hidden from those who are proud. This is essentially true of Jesus, but it is also true ([Page 27](#)) of His disciples; He is the light of the world, and they too are light.

The first of these declarations made by Jesus is found in St. John,

Jesus the Light of the World

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

The second in St. Matthew.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

But how did the disciples receive that light, which is not theirs by any right? As St. Luke explains, they opened their eyes to the light that Jesus is in Himself, while others shut themselves up in their darkness?

The Light of the Body

33 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. **34** Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. **35** Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. **36** If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light." Luke 11: 33-36

These ideas therefore of light and darkness, claimed by some to be peculiar to St. John, have derived from Jesus, but under a variety of forms which it is not difficult to restore to their original unity. In the present instance St. Matthew dwells upon that sad warning which comes from Jesus like a groan: 'If then the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be!'

23 but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! Matthew 6:23

But St. Luke adopts a more joyful view: 'If then thy whole body be lightsome, having no part dark, the whole shall be lightsome as when the lamp with its shining enlightens thee.'

36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light." Luke 11:36 (from variant Greek reading).

St. John in our opinion speaking in his own name but confidently reproducing the teaching of Jesus, has summed it all up in the following synthesis:

19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **20** For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. **21** But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. John 3: 19-21 (No.31 in the synopsis).

'The light is come into the world and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their works were evil. For everyone that doth evil hateth the light and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov'd (Known for what they are). But he that doth the truth cometh to the light, that it may be manifested that his works are done in God.' We confess therefore that his works are done in what circumstances, and even in what precise order, Jesus gave this teaching about light; nevertheless that does not prevent our seeing its shining and reflection.

The Pharisees and Doctors of the Law (171-172)

Jesus Denounces Pharisees and Lawyers

37 While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him; so he went in and sat at table. **38** The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. **39** And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. **40** You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? **41** But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. **43** Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market places. **44** Woe to you! for you are like graves which are not seen, and men walk over them without knowing it."

45 One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also." **46** And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. **47** Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. **48** So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Luke 11:37-48

52 Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

53 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, **54** lying in wait for him, to catch at something he might say.

Luke 11: 52-54

Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, **2** "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; **3** so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. **4** They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear,^[a] and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. **5** They do all their deeds to be seen by men; for they make their phylacteries^[b] broad and their fringes long, **6** and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, **7** and salutations in the market places, and being called rabbi by men. **8** But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. **9** And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.^[c] **10** Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. **11** He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; **12** whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in.^[d] **15** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell^[e] as yourselves.

16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ **17** You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? **18** And you say, ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ **19** You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? **20** So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; **21** and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; **22** and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. **24** You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. **26** You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. **28** So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, **30** saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ **31** Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. **32** Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. **33** You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?^[f] **34** Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, **35** that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechari’ah the son of Barachi’ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. **36** Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation.

The Lament over Jerusalem

37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! **38** Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.^[g] **39** For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” Matthew 23

The most striking characteristic of the ministry of Jesus, and the one which brought about His condemnation, was the difference between His teaching and that of the Doctors of the Law who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. Already in His opening discourse He had marked out His (Page 28) own way along lines altogether different from theirs. He was not one of them, as they realized at once. In order to make sure of Him they kept watch, set traps for Him, endeavored to

compromise Him, to seize Him, to have Him suddenly stoned. They pushed their hatred so far as to accuse Him of being a tool of Satan even while He was working for the kingdom of God, the kingdom of which they looked on themselves as the appointed representatives. When they attacked Him, He was of course on the defensive and justifiably so; and He certainly had the right to attack them in His turn. Not that we wish to account in this manner for the stern warnings He addressed to the Pharisees. Since He was the light, He had to distinguish Himself from the darkness; and since the Pharisees claimed that they worshiped the true God who was their Father, Jesus had to show how their piety towards God differed from His own. We might say that He owed this explanation to all those whom His enemies were turning aside from the path that leads to God by love. The religious sentiments of the Pharisees were little better than the attitude of the servant who thinks he has done enough when he has performed his appointed task, a service that is chiefly external and devoid of affection for the master. Instead of showing charity for the ignorant people whom they despised, they claimed to discharge their duty to them by binding them more strictly to this same sort of service. Jesus on the other hand ardently desired to instruct the populace; but such large heartedness seemed to the Pharisees out of keeping with that precious knowledge for the acquisition of which they themselves had labored so indefatigably in studying the sacred text. With what care, also, had they not devoted themselves to the task of gathering from former masters the tradition handed down from generation to generation, a tradition which unceasingly sprang up around the Law like some luxuriant growth! It was high time that this tradition should be shown for what it was, a parasitical growth that was exhausting the sap of the tree. The stronger and greener the parasite, the more the tree withers and rots.

Briefly, Jesus had come to heal sinners, and the Pharisees too were sinners, but it was impossible to heal them without the wholesome though painful use of the knife. It would be an error to take His 'Woe unto you!' merely as a curse, a calling down of evil. The primitive use of the curse was [\(Page 29\)](#) for the purpose of devoting the object of the curse to the gods of the lower regions. That is not the meaning of the phrase 'Woe to ...', any more than it is the meaning of the Greek 'ovai' or the Latin vae. It was the fashion to employ the expression 'Woe is me!' to signify "How unfortunate I am in this!" It is an expression of grief or lamentation uttered from a foreboding of approaching misfortune. If it be a question of another's misfortune, and a misfortune that is deserved, one's sorrow concerning the impending punishment is generally mixed with certain feelings of reproach. But out of friendship we warn the offender betimes that he may be saved while there is still opportunity. It was after this fashion that the prophet Jeremias spoke:

27

I have seen your abominations,

your adulteries and neighings, your lewd harlotries,

on the hills in the field.

Woe to you, O Jerusalem!

How long will it be

before you are made clean?" Jeremias 13:27

'Woe unto thee, Jerusalem; thou art unclean, how long yet?'

The prophets had always used severe language of this kind. Already at the feast of Tabernacles had

Jesus forsaken His customary gentleness. It is the same time and the same situation that is here indicated by St. Luke, for Jesus is still in Judea where the Scribes plumed themselves on their greater authority and added to the heavy yoke of the external observances with which they had surrounded the Law. He chooses His opportunity during a meal in the house of a Pharisee; but it is hardly likely that He would break out into hostile words at table in a house to which He had gone by invitation. It was during the meal, however, that there first arose expressions of disagreement. St. Luke appears to have strung together a series of six warnings, three addressed to the Pharisees and three to the Doctors of the Law. Two distinct groups are visualized, and they would hardly appear as such round the same table. It is somewhat later that St. Matthew has put these identical words, according to him addressed to Scribes and Pharisees together. But the important thing is that they were uttered and that they dealt with evils that were only too real.

It was therefore immediately after His instruction on the light that is invisible to those who mistake darkness that is within them for the true light, that Jesus was invited by a Pharisee to share the morning meal with him. We may well imagine that the man was not altogether wanting in sympathy towards Jesus since the Master accepts the invitation and [\(Page 30\)](#) sits down to meat with him. But at the same time he was wedded to the Pharisaic observances and showed surprise that his guest had not washed

The Greek term seems to indicate a bath, which not even the strictest observance prescribed before every meal. Did the Pharisee imagine that Jesus was more nice about ritual cleanliness than was ordinary, particularly as He had just been holding converse with an audience composed of very mixed elements? Or are we to understand the washing here spoken of as a mere rinsing of the hands?

before eating. Thereupon Jesus begins to speak, and to show that his words were not particularly addressed to His host, He speaks as though addressing people who were not present: 'Now you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within you are full of rapine and iniquity....' Then with a subtle turn He sets charity above this observance, declaring that it has the power of meriting forgiveness for injustice and of restoring purity in life: 'Yet give in alms that which is within, and all things are clean unto you.' By this cordial invitation Our Lord shows that He intends to be severe without going so far as to utter a curse against them. It was thus that God spoke by the mouth of Isaiah: 'Remember this and be ashamed: return, ye transgressors, to the heart,'

8

"Remember this and consider,

recall it to mind, you transgressors, Isaiah 46:8

Or as Septuagint translates: 'Return to Me with all your hearts.' For what they lack, these men who are so strict about keeping the Law and paying tithes of mint and rue and every kind of herb, is that righteousness which is constituted by inward holiness and the love of God. This grave reproach, which includes everything, had already been addressed to them by Jesus at Jerusalem: 'You have not the love of God in you.'

42 But I know that you have not the love of God within you. John 5:42

That is what they ought to have begun with, though they were not to neglect other things. Had they that love in their hearts they would never have dreamt of seeking the places of honor in the synagogue or of looking for those salutations in the market place which they acknowledged with a slight inclination of the head. It was nothing but contemptible vanity and it was likely to do harm to

those who looked on these men as mirrors of holiness. They were more likely tombs which betray no sign of their existence; men walked over hidden tombs unconsciously and by doing so contracted ceremonial defilement. Thus people were guided by the Pharisees, eagerly took their advice and imitated their conduct... but God was not any better loved. (Page 31)

Strong words like these struck at the Scribes just as much as the Pharisees; they belonged to the same group. But such of them as had acquired the reputation of being learned commentators on the Law showed more sensitiveness than the rest. One of these indisposed to accept the correction, regards it as nothing less than an insult: 'Master thou insultest us also.' But it was precisely the Doctors of the Law who were most to be blamed, for they did not stop at merely expounding the Law; under the cloak of exegesis they created Law and imposed it upon others. It was a load which they laid on other men's shoulders but never lent a finger of their own to carry. Did the Scribes indeed merit this reproach? Did they not rather set an example of the most meticulous observance? Doubtless they did when it cost them little; but the cleverest of the Doctors of the Law knew how to make their casuistry serve, when it pleased them, either for dispensing from the obligation of the Law or for adding to that obligation. In after years they were to declare that a man ought to be more severe with himself than he is with others

Cf. the Palestinian Talmud (Sota, III, 19a, 16). Rabbi Zeriqa, who lived about A.D.300, cites Rab Houna (died 297) as saying: 'He who decides in a way that lightens the burden where he himself is concerned, and in a way that increases the burden where others are concerned, is a crafty wretch.' (Quoted by Strack and Billerbeck, Vol I, p. 913.)

And we are bound to pay due respect to their tardy protestation; but at the same time it must be admitted that their protestation condemns in its turn what Christ had condemned long before, and that it presupposes the contract practice to have been in vogue. The contrary practice might consist, for example, in applying the indulgent decisions of Hillel in one's own case and reserving the very severe decisions of Shammai for applications to other people. Thus there were those who would not allow the sick to be healed on the Sabbath day, though they made no scruple about pulling their cow out of a pit on the same day.

The tendency of Christian theologians is surely quite the opposite. Some moralists who are convinced probabiliorists in theory have no hesitation in using principles of probabilism when hearing confessions.

The Scribes of that time, much as they were absorbed in the study of Law, nevertheless paid more attention to the writings of the prophets than their successors have paid even up to our own day. To the prophets and to those whom they called 'the just,' that is men who had received (Page 32) and handed on Tradition, they rendered homage. Even to this day at Jerusalem a special national festival is set aside when the Jews pay a visit to the tomb of Simeon the Just. With regard to those prophets who had been martyred, as tradition said that Isaiah was, the Scribes were loud in condemnation of their executioners, and considered that they themselves made reparation for the crime by building monuments to the martyrs who had borne witness to God.

The gospels, especially that of St. Matthew (23:29), are our sole source of information here. No trace of these monuments remains.

This was a new and very noticeable mark of their zeal, but Jesus turned it against them. For by thus making reparation for the crimes committed by their ancestors they admitted that they were of the same race; their protestations were nothing but an empty show, for they inherited the spirit as well as the blood of those murderers since they were even now preparing to shed the blood of Jesus: 'Fill ye

up, then, the measure of your fathers.'

This remark is missing in St. Luke, though it has to be understood if we are to solve the enigma proposed. Since burial is the last act in the slaying of the prophets, so the Doctors of the Law complete the murderous work of their ancestors by putting Jesus in the tomb. They would understand Him very well if only they thought of their hatred of Him. Moreover, Luke (11:49,ff) has explained the parable by allusion to the actual events when he speaks of the way in which the Jews persecuted the prophets and apostles; but it seems to us that St. Matthew has placed this remark in a better context when he reserves it for the last week of Jesus' life.

Last of all there comes a third reproach against the Doctors of the Law: they keep the knowledge of the Law to themselves. The Law of Moses, which is the subject of Israel's legitimate pride, is like a palace of which they have the key. They prevent others from entering, yet they themselves do not penetrate to the very heart of God's word which teaches first of all that we should love God. They stay outside, busy planting round the Law a hedge that preserves the letter but prevents men from grasping the spirit of the Law. We need hardly say that both Scribes and Pharisees were displeased with these sharp words. The consequence was that the former tried all the harder to catch Jesus by insidious questions in order to surprise Him into the utterance of some imprudent word which would put Him in explicit contradiction with the Law.

Luke 11:53,ff. This is merely the conclusion of the quarrel (cf. Commentary on St. Luke). Too much emphasis is given to it in the Synopsis (No. 172) as though it were a second act in the proceedings.

(Page 33)

Instructions to the Disciples concerning their future preaching (173-174)

A Warning against Hypocrisy

12 In the meantime, when so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. **2** Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **3** Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Exhortation to Fearless Confession

4 "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. **5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; ^[a] yes, I tell you, fear him! **6** Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. **7** Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

8 "And I tell you, every one who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; **9** but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God. **10** And every one who speaks a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. **11** And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; **12** for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Luke 12: 1-12

24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant^[c] above his master; **25** it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant^[c] like his master. If they have called the master of the house Be-el'zebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

Whom to Fear

26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. **28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^[c] **29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. **30** But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. **32** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; **33** but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 10: 24-33

19 When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; **20** for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Matthew 10: 19-20

Jesus did not expose himself to us openly to the anger of the doctors of the law merely for the pleasure of provoking them; it was necessary for Him to show wherein his Spirit differed from theirs. Having thus shown up their methods He will now tell His disciples

(This discourse is placed by Matthew chapter 10 in a setting that deals with the sending out of the disciples; but there are several points which are not concerned with the present and envisage a future that is distant. Such as precisely the force of the discourse st-luc gives it, though the surprising thing is that he shows our Lord addressing it to the disciples in the presence of a great crowd; we conclude therefore that he intends us to understand that the little group was able to withdraw a little from the crowd.)

what he looks for in those who are called to teach a doctrine that is ancient as far as its principles are concerned, a Doctrine, however, which is being completed by Him and taught with a spirit that is new. It is possible that rumor has gone round about his open denunciation of the deceitful practices of the doctors of the law, for a great crowd had assembled while people were wrangling for the foremost places near the master, He managed to draw to one side along with His disciples. Throughout the whole instruction the dominant idea, suggested by the occasion, is that they must put away from themselves the leaven of the Pharisees, or that method of dissimulation by which they would teach the people only just what they pleased.

In His own case Jesus is still obliged to exercise a certain discretion; He whispers, so to speak, in the ear and speaks darkly; and with much more reason the disciples, when they go to preach in the houses, are not to say more than their master has said. What disciple would venture to flatter himself that he could act in any other way? Yet the time will come when all will be revealed. Jesus' doctrine has not two meanings, one for the initiated which they are obliged to keep secret and the other for the

general run of people. On the contrary, what Jesus now teaches His disciples will later have to be preached on the house-tops. And if the master is wrongly judged and expose to persecution and death his disciples must expect the same. Let them, however, not fear those who kill only the body (Page 34) and not the soul, but let them fear Him alone who can cast both body and soul into Gehenna.

Then we are given three wonderful motives for confidence which, without any show of metaphysics, illustrate the attribute of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: 'Are not two sparrows sold for 1 farthing? And not one of them falls to the ground without your Father. Fear not, therefore; better are you than many sparrows.' And even if it should please the Father, who had numbered the hairs of their head, that they should fall victims to the wickedness of men, like the sparrow that falls to the ground to die, He, the Son of God, would in His turn confess them before his Father in Heaven.

And would they be abandoned and left to themselves in the ordeal? These Galilean disciples belong to a brave and generous race; death was not the thing that frightened them the most. What put them out of countenance was the idea of appearing before cunning judges, who were so well-versed in that book learning of which the teachers in the synagogues had hardly taught them the first words. In all disputes it had been their custom to keep silence, leaving their Master to defend both them and Himself. What will they do when He is no longer there? Then they shall have the help of the Holy Spirit: 'when they shall deliver you up, be not anxious about how or what to speak, for it shall be given to you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.'

(We follow Luke's order and the text of Matthew 10: 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 19)

and it is indeed the voice of the spirit of God that men of good will have recognized in the confession of Faith made by the Apostles and Martyrs. it is no longer a question of the written word of a book, a book indeed sacred in itself but which was glossed, forced in its interpretation, abused by the subtlety of men in order that it might minister to their prejudices, until finally it became unrecognizable beneath the mass of superfluities which stifled its simplicity and grandeur. This was the sincere speech of men who fear none but God, who followed in the footsteps of God's son and were ready to brave death itself for love of him, who use the same language to all men and spoke to all with genuine fellow-feeling in the spirit of charity. It was the Gospel.

Detachment from the goods of this earth (175)

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." **14** But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" **15** And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." **16** And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; **17** and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' **18** And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your

ease, eat, drink, be merry.' **20** But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' **21** So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:13-21

In the meantime the crowd had gathered around the Master in a more or less orderly manner so that someone managed to come forward in order to ask him to settle a dispute he had with his brother: 'Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.' Had the man seemed to Jesus capable of perfection, the Master would probably have said to him: 'Give him your share joyfully and follow me.' He had no intention, however, of doing away with the exercise of the right of property among men. But he wished to make it clear that arrangements about property were not His affair; He had not been sent for that. His mission was rather to preach detachment from earthly possessions; and so He replied: 'Man, who has appointed Me judge or divider over you?'

14 But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" Luke 12:14

Then He propounded the following parable.

A man who was already rich had an exceptionally good harvest. But in a country where little is exported and the crop may be more than doubled in a season of good rainfall, too much good fortune is apt to become embarrassing. Perhaps, too, this man had gone to much expense in clearing and improving his land with the view to many years of abundant harvest. So he pulled down the barns in which he stored the grain and built bigger ones. The store houses for things of greater value, his wine jars, linen chest, plate, and money he has nearer at hand. Then, addressing that part of himself which enjoys earthly goods and which he thinks is his soul, he says: 'My Soul, eat, drink, and take ease; thou hast enough for a long time.' Night falls; he cannot so much as see his coffers which are the joy of his eyes; he is alone. God speaks to his soul, his real soul, that Immortal soul to which he has never given a thought and which is going to be demanded again of him, doubtless that it may be judged. But when that happens the possessions of which he had made so sure will perish as far as he is concerned. To whom will they go? Perhaps, to sure of life to make a will, he has but amassed them for an heir whom he detests. In any case they must now pass to someone else. (Page 36)

Such is the fate of those who hoard up simply with a view to enjoying the goods of this Earth and forget that their soul belongs to God. This is a favorite subject for moralists and satirists-the wealth that slips from the icy fingers of the dead; but not one of them has been moved by such an emotion as is here represented in this description of a lost soul that has valued itself no more highly than gold. Jesus alone has made us hear that inward voice which comes in the night, God's final warning to a man who is on the way to damnation but who can yet be saved.

God's Providence may be trusted for the needs of life (176)

Do Not Worry

22 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, nor about your body, what you shall put on. **23** For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn,

and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! **25** And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life?^[b] **26** If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? **27** Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin;^[c] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **28** But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! **29** And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. **30** For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. **31** Instead, seek his^[d] kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.

32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Luke 12:22-34;

Do Not Worry

22 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, nor about your body, what you shall put on. **23** For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! **25** And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life?^[b] **26** If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? **27** Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin;^[c] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **28** But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! **29** And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. **30** For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. **31** Instead, seek his^[d] kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.

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Concerning Treasures

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[d] consume and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust^[e] consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:19-21

After this Interruption, as we may call it, Jesus turns back to his disciples. There is nothing in St. Luke's account to tell us what has brought the group of his intimate friends together again; the setting in which he places the instructions that now follow is somewhat vague. But perhaps we shall understand them best if we take them to be a continuation of the instruction on the future preaching of the Gospel. The ordinary faithful, indeed, who are obliged to obtain their food and clothing by the labor of their hands, could hardly be expected to accept what Jesus says literally in the light of a

command. But for those who build their Apostolic work on a foundation of poverty and consequently must trust to God for their food and clothing, his words are the exact expression of Truth. These in their state of voluntary poverty hear the words at first with trust, then with thankfulness, and always with the light; moreover, all Christians ought at least to be imbued with the spirit of Christ's words. 'Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns like the rich fool; 'And your heavenly father feedeth them. ... consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.'

Do Not Worry

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?^[a] **28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? **31** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Matthew 6:25,ff.

Was there ever an artist who had a greater appreciation of nature? But the thing that transports our Lord with joy is the thought of his father's Providence. Then He speaks with gentle irony: be not solicitous, (Page 37) saying: what shall we eat? or: what shall we drink? or: wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens speak, but your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.' But again he speaks with pity for the sad race of mortal men tormented by anxiety for the future: 'Be not solicitous, therefore, for the morrow, for the morrow will have its own anxieties; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

You, then who do not give up earthly possessions, labor for your needs, but leave aside all excessive anxiety, since 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

(This appears to be Matthew's meaning, for Our Lord's opening discourse deals with Christian perfection.)

But you who have agreed to follow Jesus and preach the kingdom of God in Imitation of him, 'sell what you possess and give alms.'

(These are the express words of Luke (12:33) addressed to future apostles.

and all of you, set your soul free from attachment to perishable goods and store up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, 'for where your treasure is, there will your heart also be.'

(Common to both evangelists, Matthew beginning with it, Luke putting it at the end of this section.)

Be ready for the Master's coming (178 - 179)

Watchful Slaves

35 "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, **36** and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. **37** Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. **38** If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants! **39** But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have been awake and ^ewould not have left his house to be broken into. **40** You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Slave

41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" **42** And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? **43** Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. **44** Truly, I tell you, he will set him over all his possessions. **45** But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, **46** the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish ^hhim, and put him with the unfaithful. **47** And that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. **48** But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more. **Luke 12: 35-48**

33 Take heed, watch and pray; ^afor you do not know when the time will come. **34** It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. **35** Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning— **36** lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. **37** And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

Mark 13: 33-37

43 But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Slave

45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give

them their food at the proper time? **46** Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. **47** Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. **48** But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' **49** and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, **50** the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, **51** and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. **Matthew 24: 43-51**

Despite the various ways in which he has applied his teaching, nevertheless all that Jesus has said since he left the Pharisees has had to do with the pre-eminence of the soul, and all that concerns the soul has reference to the question of its Eternal salvation. A wise man will risk his life in order to save his soul, but it is folly to debase one soul in the enjoyment of Earthly Goods. Not even the most pressing anxieties ought to turn a man from seeking the kingdom of God. Yet no matter how Earnest a man has being in this matter, all would be of no avail if he grew slack in his Fidelity at the last moment. He is lost unless he has the courage to watch. First, then, Jesus teaches this by showing us a picture of true Fidelity and by describing the inestimable reward that is the crown of such fidelity.

servants are waiting for their master who has been attending a wedding and is consequently kept until a late hour. They watch for him keeping a light the lamps, and when he knocks at the door they open it immediately, already (Page 38) To bring him in to the light. And He, delighted with their promptitude, makes them sit down at the table, while He girds up his garments in order to wait on them. To judge by common custom, this is an exaggeration; but it serves as a good illustration of what an infinite condescension there is where God is concerned, for it is easy to understand that it is He who knocks at the door. So shall it be for the whole world at the time of our Savior's coming,

(Hence Matthew could place 24:43-50 at the end of a discourse on the second coming of Christ; the same with regard to Mark 13:33-37.)

when the fate of every soul shall be at stake, as it was in the case of the rich fool. The Master's coming is the moment awaited by every good servant, and it is the Son of Man who is to come and will make his servant sit down at his feast.

The same illustration, but now reversed so to speak, shows even better how sudden and unexpected His coming may be. The Master has been careful to warn His servants that He would be late. But a thief gives no such warning. If the Master of the house suspected that a thief was coming how careful would he not watch! And God's coming is oftentimes so unexpected that it can only be compared to the coming of a thief who has laid all his plans with a view to taking people by surprise.

Here Peter interposes. It is the sole occasion on which we find him mentioned during all this journey in Judea. He wishes to know whether these words of Jesus are meant for the disciples alone or for everyone. Previously it was to the little group alone

(32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32.)

that Jesus was speaking when he counseled them to detach themselves completely from earthly goods; that applied merely to his most intimate followers. But this advice to be watchful concerns everyone, though the Master has spoken only of the servants, the guardians of the house. What about others? It is in fact of servants only that Jesus speaks when He enjoins that vigilance on which the soul's fate depends. But are not all who are in the world in His house? He is the Lord. Moreover, that would count in His eyes is not the meer waiting for a Master who is certain to come; it is fidelity to

that Master, such fidelity as never grows slack, for it is never safe from a surprise. No one can avoid the judgement; the more complete has been the Master's trust, the greater will (Page 39) the Reward be on the one hand, but the greater also the punishment on the other.

Here we are showing a servant, or rather a steward, set over all the other Servants of the house, invested with such privileges that some have wished to see in him a type of Peter himself, the head of the church. It is unlikely, however, that Jesus desired to go beyond the limits of parable and make this personal application to Peter. The advice given here applies to anyone who is in the 40 over others. If such a one is faithful, he will be set over all that belongs to his master. But if that steward, who after all is no more than a servant, begins to say to himself : ' My Lord is long a coming; and he'll begin to strike the men servants and the maidservants, and to eat and to drink and be drunk: the Lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him and shall appoint him his portion with the unfaithful.'

(45 But if that servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. 48 But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more.

Jesus the Cause of Division

49 "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! 51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; 52 for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the multitudes, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Settling with Your Opponent

57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? 58 As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. 59 I tell you, you will never get out till you have paid the very last copper." Luke 12:45,ff.)

Other servants, less loved and less honored but who likewise have been told what is the will of the master and have paid no attention to it, will be punished and severely beaten. finally those to whom the master gave no orders but who will have gone ill, will suffer lighter punishment. Peter now knows

what he wanted to know: 'unto whomsoever much as given, of him much shall be required.'

(48 But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more. Luke 12:48)

Others will settle their account more easily.

We have just seen Peter asking for an explanation in the manner that he used in Galilee. Are we to conclude that the reason why he appears in Judea only on this occasion was because he had been compelled to absent himself for reasons of which we have no idea? Is it not more probable that, being out of his element in a land that is unfamiliar to him and where he had no landmarks, he did not dwell upon that period of our Lord's teaching in his catechesis as handed on to us by St. Mark? Luke on the other hand has collected information from reliable witnesses, but it lacks the vividness that Peter could have given to it. We are compelled therefore to draw our own conclusions concerning changes of scene and the various Impressions produced on the hearers. We find Luke, after narrating that all important instruction which has chiefly in view the destiny of the Gospel in the remote future and the eternal fate of the soul, returning again to the burning questions (Page 40) of the day-the excitement produced in men's minds by the preaching of Jesus, the signs of the times, the necessity of doing penance immediately. Seeing that the calumnies of the Pharisees occasioned by Jesus' miracle gave rise to his discussions with them, it is safe to surmise that the people were variously stirred up in consequence, and that somewhere in Judea actual disputes arose between the followers of Jesus and his enemies.

Jesus is a sign of contradiction (180)

Jesus the Cause of Division

49 "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! 51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; 52 for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Luke 12: 49-53

Not Peace, but a Sword

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's foes will be those of his own household.

Matthew 10:34-36

Jesus had won the affection of his disciples, and those who followed them were conscious of the desire to love God more. He foresaw the coming of that new fire of Charity which was to burn with in men's hearts, and he cried out: ' I am come to cast fire upon the Earth, and how greatly I desire that it be even now enkindled!' But she will not touch the hearts of men until he has given his life for them and would that the hour for that we're past; for in the sensitive part of his soul he feels shrinking from all the suffering he will have to endure, and he knows that only after those sufferings will the flame of that love which you desire so ardently to in Kindle be spread amongst men. He Likens his passion to a baptism:

(38 and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Cf. Mark 10:38 [section (224) below].)

'I have a baptism where with I am to be baptized, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished!' Surely then at least there will be no peace! But no, on the contrary; it is also His lot to kindle another fire, one of hatred and dissension: ' Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father. ...'

These words are astonishing, like so many others of his, and It is from their tone rather than from the words themselves that we must gather their meaning. Who could bring himself to credit Jesus with the intention of sowing discord in the family? St. John makes no mistake about his desire for unity, his Supreme desire;

(11 And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. John 17: 11)

and while he was full of that desire he knew very well that his disciples (Page 41) would be the object of the world's hatred. It is one of the sad aspects of His mission that it not only inspires love; it is also an occasion for the breaking out of discord.

Such is what He has come to do. The fire is about to be kindled. Has He the right to complain, then? Though He shudders at the prospect, He goes forward to a passion that He wills for the salvation of the world; and even after that there will be a breaking of the tenderest family ties. Was it not believed by all that the Messiah was to be the Prince of Peace? Yet see what a travesty the malice of men is already making of His role!

Where it legitimate to try to forget the profound impression made by this pathetic disclosure, which everything that we know of Jesus forbids us to take in its literal sense, we might do so by calling to mind that this is only one aspect of His mission, though it is such a distressing aspect that it seems to hide all the rest. He had come also to restore to men inward peace and to reunite them all in a society who's one law is the law of love. It is also to be observed that these sayings of Jesus which are so obviously authentic- for who would have dared to risk such a paradox as they imply?- disprove in a most decided fashion the contention of certain critics, who see in Jesus merely a prophet proclaiming a kingdom of God which is to come in the immediate future, a kingdom in which perfect innocence will reign and come to pass under the very eyes of the Messiah. Jesus had already foretold

the persecution which awaited His messengers, and he now sees it all in one glance. And what He sees is most painful to His loving heart, for it is one long series of quarrels and dissensions. Would that such dissensions and quarrels were to be confined to his disciples and their opponents outside the church, and were not to exist between his own followers!

It is time to be reconciled with God(181)

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the multitudes, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. **55** And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. **56** You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Settling with Your Opponent

57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? **58** As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. **59** I tell you, you will never get out till you have paid the very last copper." **Luke 12: 54-59**

2 He answered them,^[a] "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.' **3** And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. **Matthew 16: 2,3**

25 Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; **26** truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny. **Matthew 5: 25-26**

In the presence of his disciples Jesus had opened his heart. To the crowd, always eager to hear Him, He still speaks in parables which appeal to the understanding by their simplicity and clarity, and which of themselves call out for application to those who flatter themselves that (Page 42) Vol II.-D They alone are the present teachers of the people. They draw near, and Luke labels them hypocrites

56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? **Luke 12:56**

a title under which we recognize those who Matthew calls here

16 And the Pharisees and Sad'ducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. **Matthew 16:1**

the Pharisees and Sadducees. The first parable is given under different forms by the two evangelists, and it is probable that it was twice spoken by Jesus. It is time for His adversaries to realize that the

fate of Israel is at stake. At no previous period had its history seemed more pregnant with consequences; would Israel do homage to the Messiah, or would it reject him and so commit a crime beyond repair?

These men who are so wise know, like everyone else, how to foretell the weather. The two comparisons used by Jesus here have, each in its own way, a Palestinian character. The chief question in that country is whether rain may be expected. St Luke's account says that when clouds come up from the southwest, driven before strong wind, rain may be looked for; If the wind blows from the south east it will be hot.

(This would be the case at the end of October, the season of scorching sirocco.)

St Matthew's account is more subtle in it's discernment; the sky is red in both instances. If it be evening, a red sky means fine weather, for the very atmosphere is glowing with the Sun; if it be morning, then redness in the clouds is a sign of rain. A certain habit of observation is needed to make these forecasts; but would it be possible for anyone who could do that to make a mistake about the seriousness of the times, when one saw Jews faithful to the law, living in a state of semi slavery, self-appointed Messiah's coming forward to summon them to revolt, while Jesus, recognized as the Messiah by the Baptist, was preaching repentance in view of the Kingdom of God and working miracles on every side?

Even if people still hesitated to come to a decision as to whether they should follow Jesus or not, surely all at any rate were agreed about the need of divine help and, consequently, about the immediate necessity of being reconciled with God. Do the leaders of the people want to find God in the camp of their opponents during the great crisis of the nation? They are allowed in their claims to represent His cause, yet they are just the ones, who neglect to do Penance and so put themselves right with Him. They show more prudence in the management of their business dealings; [\(Page 43\)](#) they know that it is better to come to any sort of agreement with one's adversary than to risk going to law. Even when it is a case of homicide the offended relatives will perhaps consent to accept a reasonable pecuniary settlement. Once the case is being put in the hands of the judge, he will have to pass sentence according to the rigour of the law. Try, then, to come to terms with your adversary, even when it is only a question of a debt, lest he hand you over to the judge; For the judge will force you to pay the last farthing. The appearance of the judge and the threat of condemnation throw light on the situation. There is just time for the Jews to be converted before the hour of divine chastisement begins.

(This at any rate, is Luke's meaning, as we see from the context. Matthew has rather stressed the importance of peace with one's neighbor.)

The need of immediate repentance (182)

Repent or Perish

13 There were some present at that very time who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? **3** I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. **4** Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Silo'am fell and killed them,

do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? **5** I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6 And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. **7** And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Lo, these three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down; why should it use up the ground?’ **8** And he answered him, ‘Let it alone, sir, this year also, till I dig about it and put on manure. **9** And if it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.” **Luke 13:1-9**

It was at this time that someone told Jesus how Pilate had caused certain Galileans to be massacred whilst they were offering sacrifices in the temple.

(The text of St Luke is our only evidence for this incident.)

It was news that affected him closely, seeing that he was a Galilean himself. The ordinary Galileans were men of great spirit, quick to take action, and Pilate had shown himself merciless on more than one occasion. It is possible that some popular stir, perhaps of a Messianic character, had happened even though it was not the time of some great feast when such things might be expected. For this reason we see how prudent Jesus had been when He declined to accompany his Kinsmen at the last Feast of Tabernacles.

The Unbelief of Jesus’ Brethren

7 After this Jesus went about in Galilee; he would not go about in Judea, because the Jews^[a] sought to kill him. **2** Now the Jews’ feast of Tabernacles was at hand. **3** So his brethren^[b] said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples may see the works you are doing. **4** For no man works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” **5** For even his brethren did not believe in him. **6** Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil. **8** Go to the feast yourselves; I am not^[c] going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.” **9** So saying, he remained in Galilee.

Jesus at the Festival of Booths

10 But after his brethren had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.

John 7:1-10

Had the above mentioned massacre taken place in Galilee there would no doubt have been plenty ready to take the part of their countrymen. But the Jews argued thus: the victims must have deserved their punishment, since God had decreed that they should suffer in this manner. Now that they had received their punishment there was no reason for anyone else to fear God's anger. In reasoning thus, the doctors of the law made a two-fold mistake. They were interpreting a Divine judgment according to the principles of their own religious fatalism when they ought to have accepted it as a (Page 44) warning to everyone to repent. They had forgotten the lesson of the book of Job. Jesus therefore rebukes them: ‘ Think you, that these Galileans

(An expression that would be surprising were Jesus speaking in Galilee.)

were sinners above all the men of Galilee, because they suffered such things? No, I say to you: but unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.' All the same, the severity of Pilate's action suggests that there had been some fault on the part of the victims, slight though it may have been. But if it was a case of some accidental misfortune it is quite evident that to condemn the victims as guilty was an act of imprudence. For example, the Tower of Siloe had recently fallen and crushed eighteen people. Was it to be concluded that they were the most guilty people in Jerusalem, and the divine justice was completely satisfied by their death? ' No, I say to you: but unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.'

When Jesus recalled this accident, well known among his hearers, he could not have been very far from Jerusalem. These were sinister omens: the cruelty of Pilate, agent of the emperor Tiberius, and the destruction of the tower that was in all probability part of the fortifications of the Holy City.

(The excavations carried out by Captain Weill in 1914 brought to light the lower courses of a tower which had once stood in the lower wall of the city in the Valley of the Kedron.)

But when it is a question of individuals, God's justice is secret; it is not always the most guilty who are struck down by sudden calamity. And as His justice is united with mercy, it serves as a warning to others that they should do penance and so escape the catastrophe while there is still time. Thus the days of Christ preaching were a merciful delay of justice, a final manifestation of God's goodness to his chosen people.

This is made sufficiently clear by the parable of the fig tree, a parable at once homely and menacing. This fig tree had been planted in a vineyard, as is still the custom in Palestine. We are not told whether or not it yielded fruit at first; but for several years at least- three is a conventional number-it had borne none. The master determined to remove it. The gardener, annoyed by the thought that he has had all his trouble to no purpose, offers to try once more; for a short time he will take all the responsibility for failure. Give it another year! He will dig the earth ([Page 45](#)) about the tree to give the roots air, and will manure it: 'And if it should bear fruit this next year ... ' Alas! The poor man has so little hope of improvement that he does not finish the sentence; he resigns himself to the inevitable: ' But if not, thou shalt cut it down.'

What a fixed determination to hope for the best is conveyed by this! And when the parable is applied to men, what a strong appeal is manifested in these final marks of devotion which are bestowed so unstintingly!

The cure of the deformed woman on the Sabbath (183)

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. **11** And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. **12** And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." **13** And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. **14** But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." **15** Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you

on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? **16** And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" **17** As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him. **Luke 13:10-17**

The evangelist does not inform us how these most urgent invitations to repentance were received: he goes on immediately to something else. Perhaps he here gives us the Master's last teaching in a synagogue. Or is it possible after all, that this most careful author has used an apparently isolated incident to explain the secret of our Lord's lack of success? Has he, in a word, given us the answer of the synagogue to the offers made by Him who had come in His love to heal? Does it sometimes happen that when a spiritual counselor is hoping to see his stern exhortations, listened to with bowed head, produce some salutary effect, he sees by means of some word or some careless movement of the head that he has not been understood or even listened to seriously. This is what happens here.

The leaders were thinking of nothing but the exact observance of the tradition of the rabbi's; in their eyes even a miracle of goodness was out of place if it's seemed to come into conflict with that. They did not stop to inquire whether the worker of this miracle was not likely to be more conversant with the meaning of the Law than were the scribes, or whether this healer who is breaking their Sabbath precepts was not sent to heal the nation itself. This Woman, This daughter of Abraham was being deformed and bowed by Satan

(There is not the slightest question of possession. It is more like the case of Job, covered with sores by Satan.)

for eighteen years, is she not the very symbol of the Jewish Nation? In any case the lesson is quite obvious without the need of any recourse to allegory. Jesus heals her without a word, but he lays his [\(Page 46\)](#) hand on her. It was doubtless this action-on a Sabbath day!- that aroused the displeasure of the chief of the synagogue. He had heard from others that Jesus works many miracles; but that does not concern him, it is not his affair. His duty is to see that the Sabbath rest is observed in his synagogue. The conflict between charity and legality terminates in his mind with a reconciliation of the opposing claims that is almost comic: 'Six days there are in which you ought to work. Come, therefore, on them and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.'; as though Jesus had a surgery, and ought to have closed it on Saturdays! The Lord answered him in the plural, for you represented the whole of his cast: 'Ye hypocrites! Doth not everyone of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?' And perhaps we are given to understand that deliverance from Satan's bonds- speaking in the moral order, remission of sins- is not only permissible, but most fitting on the day consecrated to God. The time of the Messiah was to be a time of remission and grace.

18

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19

to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” **Luke 4: 18,19**

The adversaries of Jesus had nothing to say: they were baffled but not moved by his words. The crowd rejoiced at these Miracle, but they likewise were unable to draw the inference, namely that the season of repentance had come. They did not know that not only are God's grace is given in consequence of repentance, but are also granted to move and turn the heart.

(Luke has placed after this The Parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, as though to show that the kingdom of God once begun would establish itself in spite of all. We have spoken of these Parables above, volume 1, Pages 187, 189)

End of Chapter 4 Section 4 of The Gospel of Jesus Christ by Pere Lagrange [Page 46](#)